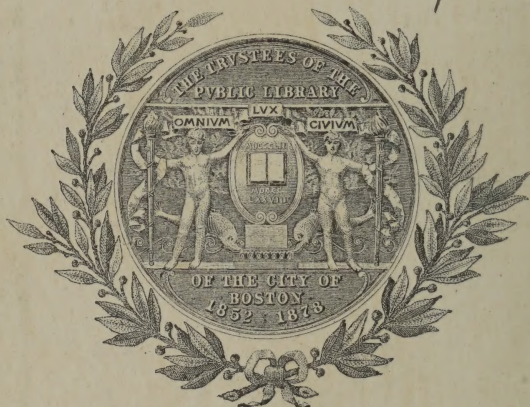




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A HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN COMPROMISES.

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A HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN COMPROMISES.

THE existing condition of affairs in the United States naturally sets people inquiring of one another about the meaning of the prominent terms of the great domestic controversy ; and there are few who can give a precise answer. "What is the MISSOURI COMPROMISE?" "What is the NEBRASKA Bill?" "Why is the settlement of KANSAS so critical?" These are the questions about which everybody has some idea, but which require an accurate answer before the interior politics of the AMERICAN UNION can be so clearly understood as they ought now to be by every Englishman. A brief statement of the historical antecedents of the controversy which has at present assumed the character of civil war, may supply a want ; and I therefore propose to sketch the history of "the Difficulty" of the great Republic, from the time when the founders of the Constitution brooded over it till now.

It has been truly said that America is the country of two ideas, and that those ideas are—SLAVERY and ANTI-SLAVERY. My short narrative will show how the leading points of American government and policy have been determined by those ideas, from the first days of the Republic till now ; and a more detailed history would exhibit the same truth in regard to the minutest ramifications of the political action of the United States. It was by an early recognition of this truth that the Abolitionists were rendered at once confident in their own ground, hateful to idolators of the Union, and formidable to rulers who dreaded change. The Abolitionists knew that the great modifying anomaly of their social structure must come into question some day ; and they were feared and hated

or saying so. The day has arrived, and the entire nation is openly divided into two sections,—pro-slavery and anti-slavery.

These ideas were in the minds of the founders of the Republic, scarcely less prominently, perhaps, than they are now in the minds of PRESIDENT PIERCE and of every public man in the Union. The difference was, that the first set of men used no disguise about their difficulty, while the efforts to conceal it have been redoubled in the most recent times, and the more eagerly in proportion to the growth of political danger. FRANKLIN made the broadest abolition speeches in the Pennsylvania Legislature, without apparently exciting either surprise or wrath. WASHINGTON declared that the possession of slaves was a heavy weight on his mind; and he made testamentary dispositions designed to secure their emancipation. JEFFERSON's avowal on this subject is perhaps the most celebrated of his sayings:—"God has no attribute which can take part with the American slaveholder." FRANKLIN was President of the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania, and WASHINGTON and JEFFERSON were members. This society has existed ever since; and the present Secretary is the Quaker Confessor, Passmore Williamson, whose imprisonment made so much noise last year. The danger of the position has much increased since Franklin's time. When the Republic was founded, Slavery existed over nearly the whole territory. Its effects were so mischievous, even in those days of small things, that there could be no doubt of future trouble, first bringing on and then determining the alternative whether to abolish or continue it, amidst fears and perils on either hand. On this account the Constitution was arranged with the best skill available at the time. The Constitution took the least possible notice of Slavery, and gave powers to the separate States, and balanced those powers in the Central Government, in a manner which might enable it to evade the future difficulty, and to throw the settlement of it on the separate States.

Thus there were, in the original Constitution, only two

clauses which had any relation whatever to Slavery. This is a point so important to the understanding of the subsequent history, that I cannot too strongly draw attention to these two clauses, and to the fact that there were no more. "We," says the preamble of the American Constitution, "the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The Constitution of 1787 consists of seven ARTICLES, each divided into *Sections*; and the sections again into clauses; and of this last minute division, consisting of eighty-two, only two have any reference to Slavery. The reason is not the insignificance of the subject, but its difficulty. The first of the clauses I shall quote is obviously of extreme political importance. It was in the hope that the separate States would manage the difficulty, each for itself,—that it was so concisely dealt with in the fundamental document of the Republic. The significant clause I refer to is in the second Section of the first Article. The clause decrees the proportion of representatives to population; viz., not less than one for every thirty thousand; and then ensues the remarkable provision for reckoning slaves among the constituency. After giving the suffrage to "free persons," excluding Indians, this clause enacts that there shall be added "to the whole number of free persons, three-fifths of all other persons," that is, of slaves. A free white population does not flourish in the presence of Slavery; and, therefore, slave territory was to be endowed with a fictitious constituency of no less than three-fifths of the slave population. The obvious difficulty was in prospect that, sooner or later, somebody would insist on knowing whether the slaves were or were not men, with social capacities. If they were, they had a right to citizenship in a democratic Republic; and if they were not, they could be only a sham constituency. The further difficulty arose long ago, and is yearly on the increase; that the Northern citizens find the

Southern representation to be out of all proportion to the population; while, on the other hand, the South, exasperated at the rapid growth of Northern populations, and at the danger of being swamped in Congress, is driven to territorial aggression and to encroachment on the Constitution, to keep up its numbers in the Senate at Washington. Liable to these dangers, however, the clause was established; and three-fifths of the slaves are reckoned as free men in the particular of supplying representatives to Congress. That such a provision should have been submitted to by the Northern citizens would be inexplicable if we did not remember that Slavery was nearly universal when the Constitution was framed. That it should be still submitted to is wonderful enough; but it will not be for long, judging by recent applications to Congress for a rectification of this basis of the Southern suffrage. An anecdote related by Mr. Olmsted, in his *Journey through the Seaboard Slave States*, affords testimony in the same direction:—

“A friend of mine once said to a Georgian, ‘I confess, H., whenever I am reminded that your power in our Congress, by the reason of the hundred slaves you own, counts as sixty-one to my one, because I happen to live at the North, and choose to invest the results of my labour in railroads, instead of niggers, I have a very strong indisposition to submit to it.’

“‘I declare,’ answered the Georgian, ‘I should think you would. I never thought of it in that light before; it’s wrong, and you ought not to submit to it; and, if I were you, I would not.’”

Such as the clause was, however, in 1787, it is now, though the slaveholders are only 350,000 in a population of 27,000,000. It is by this clause alone that they have been enabled to balance the representation of the free states in Congress. That they have been permitted to overbalance it is due to the idolatry of the Constitution, which has lowered the republican spirit, and sapped the political virtue of the North.

The other clause bearing on Slavery is the third clause of Section 2, Article IV., and is thus worded:—“No person held to service or labour in one State under the laws thereof,

escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." This is the Fugitive Slave Law of 1787. It must be again remembered, that when it was made, the States were all slave States, and that there was no likeness between their mutual relation and that of existing States which have opposite interests, from some having abolished, while others have eagerly and pertinaciously retained, the "institution" which has become "peculiar." Such was, in regard to slavery, the Constitution signed by WASHINGTON as President, and by all the most eminent of his political comrades, as representatives of their respective States.

Each State, it must be remembered, sends two members to the Senate. The largest and the smallest have the same representation in the Senate; while the members of the other House nearly correspond in proportion with the population. As the Northern States abolished Slavery one after the other, the South became alarmed lest the slave States should fall into a minority in the Senate, as it was too clear that they must sooner or later in the other House. As long as the slave States can preserve a majority in the Senate, or a mere equality, together with a President whose veto on any troublesome law, or repeal of a law, can be depended on, the House of Representatives is powerless. For a quarter of a century there has not been a President who was not actually or virtually pledged to veto any law unacceptable to the South; and the key to the entire policy of the United States, domestic and foreign, for that course of years, is the effort of the South to maintain a majority in the Senate at Washington. This is the explanation of the MISSOURI COMPROMISE, and of its repeal; of the political failure of every eminent man in the United States since the close of the first series of Presidents; and of the origin of every American war of late years; and of the formation and breaking-up of every political party; and of the ill-success of the free-soil representatives, headed by Mr.

Sumner; and, finally, of the KANSAS controversy, and its exasperation into civil war.

The distribution, appropriation, and administration of the Public Lands, which happen to be the ground on which the battle of republican principle is going forward, was a serious prospective difficulty when the Constitution was framed. Geographical ignorance has been, and still is, the cause of many wars, and an obstacle to arrangements for peace, as the Commissioners of the Allies in Bessarabia seem to be finding now. Never was there a more unmanageable case of geographical ignorance than that of our old English Government, when it gave to its colony of Virginia a patent for lands extending to — there is no saying where, as similar wild grants to other colonies clashed with that to Virginia. All that could be ascertained was, that the Virginia patent claim extended to the Northern Lakes, and away north-west of the Ohio, "to the Pacific." The States began to quarrel about their lands after the Revolution; and as there was no standard of reference by which their claims might be divided, WASHINGTON advised that each State should fix its own boundaries, and then throw the residue into a common stock, to be explored, surveyed, and used as the nation expanded. VIRGINIA led the way in this sensible and honourable procedure. She fixed her own boundary, and the General Government made terms with the people resident on the excluded lands which lay north-west of the Ohio. The residents and General Washington were entirely agreed as to the evil of Slavery; and the terms were, that it should never be established on that territory, and that, when the due population was attained, the territory should be divided into States, which were not to be less than three nor more than five. This compact was made in 1787; and the power of the Federal Government to preclude and prohibit Slavery on new territory was not called in question.

It is scarcely known, or not at all remembered, in England, while Americans are glad to forget it, that a struggle took place twenty years ago between the General Government and

the state of MICHIGAN, which foreshadowed that of KANSAS of the present day. The Michigan difficulty, ostensibly relating to the distribution of lands in 1787, really arose, like the MISSOURI and KANSAS conflicts, out of the ambition and jealousy of preponderance in the Senate. OHIO, anxious for admission into the Union, found the frontier line between her territory and that of Michigan "not convenient;" and, Michigan being in no condition to insist on the guaranteed boundary, was compelled to yield a portion of her domain. Ohio was admitted as a sovereign State in 1803, and the boundary she desired was ratified by Congress. Within a dozen years, INDIANA followed the example of Ohio, found the guaranteed boundary inconvenient, and obtained a ratification by Congress of a boundary laid down by herself. On this occasion, however, some compensation was offered to Michigan, a slice of territory from Wisconsin being placed at her disposal. But this slice was on the further shore of Lake Michigan, which is the natural boundary of the State of that name; and there was little doubt that, from this real and indisputable "inconvenience," the residents on that section of land would prefer belonging to Wisconsin, whenever Wisconsin became a State. The decision of this kind of dispute belongs to the Supreme Court of the United States; and to that tribunal the business would have been left, but for the ever-present jealousy of the slave States about preponderance in the Senate. While awaiting the time when the Supreme Court could hear the cause (that is, on the admission of all the parties into the Union,) Michigan was borne down on every side. Ohio and Indiana wished to keep the territory they had acquired, and did not want the question to be stirred,—whether the original allotment had been constitutionally ignored by Congress: and the whole body of slave States desired to give a piece of Wisconsin to Michigan, in order to render the Wisconsin territory too small to be divided into two States, as it might be by a *proviso* in the original allotment, and was likely to be, if the Southern States pursued, on their part, a course of annexation of territory, for the manufacture of States, and for senatorial repre-

sentation. When Michigan became qualified by a sufficient population to request admission to the Union, in 1834, she declared her discontent with the boundaries prescribed by Congress, and her intention of claiming, in the Supreme Court, the restitution of the original lines. She organized her State Government, and sent her senators to Washington for the session of 1835-6. Her senators were allowed to witness the proceedings of Congress, but not to vote: and the next proceeding was one which fixed the attention of the whole Union on the dispute, and which should have precluded, by rousing a due indignation, the vital conflicts which must sooner or later follow political pusillanimity in such a case. Congress, moved by Southern influence, actually usurped the judicial functions of the Supreme Court, and undertook to decide the controversy, by proposing to admit Michigan into the Union, on condition of her surrendering all claim to the disputed lands. This was usurping the judicial function deciding without evidence, and requiring a candidate State to lay down her rights on the threshold of Congress, as a fine on a benefit to which she had an unrestricted right. Two characteristic speeches of that date which came under my own knowledge laid open the real bearings of the dispute to the mind of a stranger. Ex-President Adams declared that Michigan had a stronger reason for retiring from the Union than South Carolina had ever had; and a South Carolina leader declared, in conversation, that he believed the claims of Michigan to be sound, but that he would rather strive against her admission as long as he lived, than give her opportunity to summon another sovereign State before the Supreme Court. There was, probably, an *arrière pensée* in his mind about the convenience of so reducing the area of Wisconsin, as to disqualify it for division into two States.

The opportunity was a noble one for the young State. Her right course was to remain sovereign at home, but outside the Union. But some of her citizens lusted after the portion of surplus revenue which would fall to her share if she was a member of the Federation; others feared for the fortunes of the new canal; and others were nervous about war, though there

was no necessity for war, when the dispute lay within the province of the Supreme Court. In 1836, Michigan bore her testimony honestly. She refused to enter the Union on unconstitutional terms. But the struggle was too unequal. A tumultuous minority, aided by trickery at Washington, made concessions in the name of the people at large, and Michigan became a member of the Union a few months after; throwing in her lot with the rest for future glory or shame, instead of standing out for the glory all alone. While she was still too young to protest or resist under the aggressions of her neighbours (that is, four years after she was robbed by Indiana,) the Missouri Compromise was passed; and it was regarded as immutable and eternal, when Michigan became one of the United States.

[By 1820, there was a balance of free and slave States; and here we meet again the struggle for the majority in the Senate. Northern men desired that the inhabitants of any new territory should choose their institutions for themselves; but it was the resolute purpose of the South, either to secure the establishment of Slavery in the candidate State, or to get a new slave State admitted for every free one.] On the first alternative they were beaten; the second appeared to be the only feasible one. It seemed probable that new States would be admitted in pairs for an indefinite time; but circumstances compelled a coming to the point in the case of the admission of Missouri. The MISSOURI COMPROMISE was believed by all but the most far-sighted of the citizens of the Union to have settled "the Difficulty" for ever.

In 1803, Bonaparte sold to the United States the whole territory which belonged to the French in America, and which was called LOUISIANA, though the State which now bears that name was a very small part of it. Bonaparte despaired of defending the Mississippi from the British, and was delighted to sell the territory for 80,000,000 francs. The southernmost portion of this territory was presently erected into the State of LOUISIANA. In 1819, another portion, not contiguous to Louisiana, but bordering on the Missouri as well as the Mississippi, applied for admission into the Union, when duly

peopled; and the question of the terms of admission of the State of MISSOURI was debated in 1819.

By that time the free and slave States were, as I have said, equal; and desperate was the struggle to establish Slavery in Missouri, or to exclude it by the terms of admission. There was nothing in the climate and productions of Missouri to justify a special resort to negro labour; but it was otherwise with the new acquisition of FLORIDA, and with the territory of ARKANSAS, a portion of the French lands lying between Louisiana and Missouri. ARKANSAS and FLORIDA were only waiting for the admission of MISSOURI to qualify and apply for their own admission; and the South was determined to have them all on the side of her policy, and thus to obtain a majority of six in the Senate. The North, and the leading statesmen of the time, contended that the Constitution conferred a power to make conditions, on matters of fundamental republican principle, with candidate States; and that such principle now required that the extension of Slavery to a new soil should be prohibited. The prohibition of Slavery on the distribution of the Virginia lands in 1787 proves, as I remarked before, that the power was no matter of doubt at that time; yet it was now contested, in the teeth of as many as survived of the very men who had made the Constitution and distributed the lands. The conflict was fierce; and it embittered the latter days of the patriots who yet survived—Jefferson, Jay, Adams, Marshall, and indeed all the old political heroes. “From the Battle of Bunker’s Hill to the Treaty of Paris,” says Jefferson* to Adams, “we never had so ominous a question. I thank God I shall not live to witness its issue.” Again, after the compromise:† “This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding

* *Jefferson’s Correspondence*, Letter CL., December 10th, 1819.

† *Ibid.* Letter CLII., April 22nd, 1820.

with a marked principle, moral or political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper." Jay wrote: "I concur in the opinion that Slavery ought not to be introduced nor permitted in any new States; and that it ought to be gradually diminished, and finally abolished in all of them." The most cautious of politicians, Judge Story, never threw himself into any great public question but once; and this was the occasion. He spoke in public on behalf of the absolute prohibition of Slavery, by express act of Congress, in all the Territories, and against the admission of any new slave-holding State, except on the unalterable condition of the abolition of Slavery. He grounded his argument on the Declaration of Independence, and on the Constitution of the United States, as well as on the radical principle of Republicanism. When the result was trembling in the balance, and the issue seemed to depend on the votes of six waverers, Judge Story predicted a settlement by compromise—a present yielding to the South on condition that it should be for the last time; this "last time," however, involving the admission of the two waiting States, whose climate and productions afforded an excuse for Slavery to which Missouri could not pretend. A short and pregnant sentence, in a letter of Judge Story's, shows that a new light had begun to break in upon him at Washington, which might make him glad of such a compromise, as a means of gaining time for the preservation of the Union. After relating the extraordinary pretensions of the South, he concludes thus:* "But of this say but little; I will talk about it on my return: but our friends in general are not ripe for a disclosure of the great truths respecting Virginia policy." Republican citizens ought to be always "ripe" for all possible "disclosures;" and if Judge Story and others had had due faith in their countrymen, a timely exposition of the truth might have saved a long course of guilt and misery, and have precluded the civil war which seems

* *Life and Letters of Joseph Story.* Vol. i. p. 362.

likely to solve the question after all. When the compromise was effected, he wrote to Mr. Everett,* “ We have foolishly suffered ourselves to be wheedled by Southern politicians until we have almost forgotten that the honours and the Constitution of the Union are as much our birthright and our protection as of the rest of the United States. . . . I trust that the Missouri question will arouse all the spirit of New England. All the South and West stood in solid column, while the Eastern States were thinned by desertion, and disgraced by the want of (military) commanders.” Judge Story wrote to Lord Stowell, and sent him materials for a judgment, requesting his opinion in regard to the powers of Congress to impose a condition upon the admission of Missouri into the Union. But there was no real doubt of the existence of such a power; and when this became more and more apparent from day to day, the deficiency in argument was made up for by excess of passion; and almost every statesman in the country believed the Union to be on the verge of dissolution. At this moment Mr. Clay proposed such a compromise as Judge Story had anticipated.

[Up to this time the slaveholders had pleaded that Slavery was an inherited institution; that it was imposed upon them—a necessary evil which they had no choice but to endure.] This was Mr. Clay’s usual plea; and yet it was well known that it was Mr. Clay who prevented his own State, Kentucky, from abolishing Slavery when the condition of her population would have enabled her to do it. And now, there was not the smallest pretence for introducing Slavery into Missouri. The inhabitants saw how well their opposite neighbours of Indiana and Illinois prospered under that prohibition of Slavery which was involved in the terms of cession of their land; and they would have acquiesced in a restriction which imposed no sort of hardship or disappointment at the moment; but Mr. Clay imposed slave institutions on them to please the South, and destroyed for ever the old plea, that Slavery was an inherited mischief, and not a cherished vice.

* *Life and Letters of Joseph Story.* Vol. i. p. 366.

He proposed an enactment that, on condition of Missouri being now admitted on Southern terms, Slavery should be henceforth prohibited for ever on all the territory recently acquired from France, lying north of $36^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude—that is, of the southern boundary of Missouri. These are the terms :—“ And be it further enacted, that in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of $36^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, Slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crime whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, shall be, and hereby is, prohibited for ever.”

This is the celebrated Missouri Compromise, passed early in 1820. It needs no showing that the prohibition of Slavery, north of a certain line, determined its existence in new States south of that line; and Florida and Arkansas were soon admitted as slave Territories, and then as slave States. Among the first fruits of the arrangement was the Seminole War. The truth of that war, when disencumbered of the patriotic cant which invested it is this: By the law of all the slave States, where there is no legal marriage among the negroes, the children “follow the fortunes of the mother”—are the property of the owner of the mother. Many slaves escaped into Florida, and lived there among the swamps, and intermarried with the Seminole Indians. As soon as Florida entered the Union as a Territory the Southern slaveholders alleged that they were at war with the Seminoles, and demanded and obtained the aid of the Federal forces. Many fine young men were there among those troops who died in the swamps without knowing that they were used by the slaveholders for the purpose of recovering runaway slaves; and, yet more, of seizing the half-caste children of negro women married to Indians, on the legal plea that the children of slaves “follow the fortunes of the mother.” This incident is only one in the long series which exhibit the free and prosperous North as the tool and the servant of the slaveholding and declining South. I could detail enough to fill volumes.

The experience of MICHIGAN has shown how little reliance could be placed on compromises between the National Government and the separate States, when it was the interest of a strong party to violate them; and in the course of a dozen years from the passage of the Missouri Compromise, the General Government found how difficult it was to deal with the separate States when they, on their side, had a mind to "nullify" the decisions of Congress and the provisions of the Constitution. It must suffice here to say, that in 1829, the President found himself in the awkward predicament of having, in the first instance, encouraged Georgia to disobey a federal arrangement about the lands of the Cherokee Indians, and then finding other States follow the example. South Carolina "nullified" the acts of Congress about the tariff; and Virginia claimed the right, for every State, of interpreting the Constitution for itself, instead of deferring to the interpretation of the Supreme Court. If this were allowed, the Federal Government could not be secure for a day; and the President saw this when, in 1829, three States were on the point of seceding from the Union. I relate this now merely to account for Mr. Clay's second great Compromise, which was one of the most important political acts of its time, though its importance was merely temporary, and not of the vast significance of the Missouri Compromise.

At the close of 1832, all the preparations for civil war were complete. The United States' forces were marching down upon Charleston, and a sloop of war was in the harbour to protect the federal officers in the discharge of their duties. The South Carolinians, on the other hand, had collected their militia, levied funds for war, and put forth proclamations in defiance of those of the President. The real quarrel was about the rights of the General and State Governments; but South Carolina found it convenient to assume the stronger ground of free trade,—the immediate occasion of the dispute being the tariff. When the dissolution of the Union appeared inevitable, Mr. Clay, himself a Protectionist, proposed terms which all were glad to accept,—a regulation of the tariff,

spread over a long course of years, which gave the victory to South Carolina, in regard to the lowering of duties, while it secured time to the General Government to provide against the recurrence of such dangerous conflicts. After that date (February, 1833) Mr. Clay was called the Saviour of the Union, his two Compromises having deferred the crisis which has come up again more than once since. Neither he nor his admirers seem thus far to have perceived that, in a federal republic, such compromises can never be more than postponements of difficulty. Before he died, he had learned the lesson.

The South Carolina Compromise had no further connexion with the vital Land and Labour controversy than this :—That South Carolina, harassed and mortified by the decline of her strength and importance, chose to attribute her adversity to the prosperity of the North, instead of to its real cause—the bad quality of slave labour. In her advocacy of free trade she was doubtless right, but not in taking for granted that free trade would render her prosperous without free labour. She gained her point of the ultimate reduction of the tariff, and has not found her affairs retrieved thereby. Her consequent irritation against the North, and resort to new enterprises of an unconstitutional kind, lead us back to the Missouri Compromise and the great Land Question, which it was to have settled for ever.

After the Missouri Compromise, the state of affairs was this :—The oldest slave States were becoming impoverished under the natural and invariable operation of “the peculiar institution.” Virginia was yearly lapsing into wilderness, and depending more and more on slave-breeding for existence. North Carolina was sunk past retrieval, and others were declining ; new territory was wanted for products and population, as well as for keeping up numbers in the Senate ; the North could no longer be looked to ; beyond the Ohio, the land was pledged to free institutions ; there remained only the Far West, beyond Arkansas, and south of 36 deg. 30 min. north latitude, of American territory ; but to the south-west there was Texas, and beyond Texas, Mexico. The first

American settlers in Texas were farmers, who had gone thither to escape from the curse of slave institutions, and who tilled their lands with their own hands, rejoicing that Slavery had been abolished in Texas and Mexico. Southern adventurers followed them; and by the "peculiar methods" now so familiar to the observers of American, as also of Russian, aggression, they first stirred up mischief, then interposed to put it down, then offered protection, and at length proceeded to the act of annexation. I need not relate the story of the annexation of Texas; everybody knows the facts, though few are aware of the origin and bearings of the enterprise.

As soon as it was known that the South proposed to divide Texas into five states, sending ten Senators to Congress, the inhabitants of the less sophisticated and most rural Northern States determined to be even with their rival. Natural as is the ambition to belong to a large new State, with a view to its future importance, the settlers in the North-western territories resolved rather to cut up their free lands into five or more States than to allow the thinly-peopled South a preponderance in the Senate. An equality there, with a pro-slavery President, was bad enough, since it enabled the South to throw out every measure which did not suit her institutions. A decisive majority in the Senate would overawe the House of Representatives, so as to leave no choice to the North but to be chained to the wheels of the triumphal car, of which the slave-driver would be the charioteer. It may thus be seen how the vital American controversy is determined to the new lands, within and beyond the frontier—honestly American, or Mexican, Costa Rican, or other.

There was, however, another centre of action. The Congressional District of which Washington is the capital, is wholly and absolutely under congressional government. It is a territory of sixteen miles square, ceded by Maryland and Virginia for federal purposes. In the great struggle for supremacy, the struggle, as Sumner puts it, *whether Liberty shall be sectional and Slavery national, or the reverse*, the political position of this District of Columbia must be of high

importance. If there could be an exact balance in the two Houses, and perfect impartiality in the President, Slavery would still be a national institution while it existed in the District, and particularly if the sale of slaves went on within its boundaries. The Abolitionists, who rose into notice (as a moral sect, not a political party) in 1832, began their enterprise by pertinacious petitioning for the abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia. The consequence was, as my readers can scarcely need to be reminded, that the right of petition itself was suspended. After this, no man in the whole Union could pretend to consider "the Difficulty" as anything less than all-important. The defence of the right of petition by ex-President Adams, on the floor of the House of Representatives, in 1837, is a fine passage of history. In 1835, Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun, and other Southern leaders, were, or pretended to be, confident that the subject of Slavery would never be discussed in Congress: and they thought they had secured the fulfilment of their own prophecy when they had obtained the suppression of the right of petition. But they merely changed the course of action of the Abolitionists, and strengthened their hands by furnishing them with the argument that the whites were now made slaves by the deprivation of their constitutional liberties in Congress. In ten years from the suppression of the right of petition, not only had the right been restored, but the Southern policy received its first decided check by the rejection of a proposal to extend the line of the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific Ocean; that is, to establish Slavery everywhere south of that line. It now appears probable that before the second ten years are over, the South will either have succumbed to the true republican policy, or have been repudiated by the North,—so rapid has been the progress of the question which was never to be mentioned in Congress!

In January, 1842, the first petition for the dissolution of the Union was presented to Congress by ex-President Adams, the ground assigned being the tyrannous supremacy of the South, which involved the whole Union in the disgrace and mischief of

slave institutions. This was from a town in Massachusetts. In 1844, the legislature of Massachusetts sent to Congress resolutions in favour of an amendment of the Constitution, by which the element of slave representation should be removed, and the electoral basis of the Southern States made the same with that of the Northern. These moves excited the Southern legislatures to extreme insolence, such as that of returning the copy of the resolutions sent. The annexation of Texas was next carried with a high hand, after a delay of some years, caused by the noble resistance and exposure made by Dr. Channing, in his celebrated Letter to Mr. Clay. During this time the Abolitionists were suffering to extremity: now the burning of their houses or public halls; now the destruction of their commerce, or the professional prospects of their children; and now, public whippings, or tarring and feathering; and, in more than one case, death by assassination. The original group, however, steadily declined political action, not only from a deep sense and long observation of the uncertainties of political issues in their country, but because they could not qualify for Congress by taking an oath of complete fidelity to the Constitution, which it was their object to annul, in preparation for a better. Those Abolitionists who did not feel themselves so restricted became the Free-soil Party; and some of their leaders, with Mr. Sumner at their head, entered Congress. It will be seen at once, that their object is not the abolition of Slavery, as incompatible with democratic republicanism, but its limitation within present bounds. They will be satisfied if Slavery is only sectional, instead of national. They contended for the Wilmot proviso, which prohibited Slavery in all territories acquired from Mexico; and they have found plenty of occupation during the more recent struggles to plant down Slavery in all new States; but they never have been, and never can be a powerful party, for want of a sounder and broader basis than they profess. They have been defeated in Congress in every instance, except that of California; and their success in that case was merely nominal. Mr. Brooks has at length tried knocking the party on the head in the

person of its representative, Mr. Sumner; but it was scarcely worth his while, now that there is in the other House a majority of representatives who go for more than the preservation of things as they are. But description or discussion of political parties does not fall within my province. I am writing of certain Compromises, and not of those who framed and enacted them.

The next first-class Compromise was that of 1850. Before that date, the signs of pressure on pro-slavery champions became visible. Mr. Clay proposed a scheme (impracticable, of course) for gradual emancipation in Kentucky, which, but for him, would have been as free as Ohio for thirty years past. Col. Benton, of Missouri, opposed the introduction of Slavery into new territories. California, with Col. Frémont for her champion and spokesman, was allowed to legislate for herself on the great question, and decided against Slavery. Lastly, the slave market was removed from the District of Columbia. Sanguine people at a distance, believed that all was now going on well; but in fact, the crash of ruin was actually visiting statesmen and their parties. We need but name the Fugitive Slave Law, to show that the South would yield nothing without a large consideration. In fact, it was the North which yielded everything. Southern citizens have carried their slaves into California without hindrance: and as for the slave-trade in the District, it is simply removed beyond the frontier (which cannot be more than eight miles distant in any direction), and it is rather an evil than a good that the scandal is removed from under the eyes of Northern men. In the other scale, there was the Fugitive Slave Bill, which was carried over the heads of the Free States, whose constitutions are wholly irreconcilable with this law. Its unconstitutional character, from its encroachments on state rights, is, we believe, uncontested. Its results are seen in the affrays produced wherever slave-catchers have appeared; in the imprisonment of Quakers, clergymen, and magistrates; in Boston being in a state of siege for the first time since the revolutionary war; in the assertion of *Habeas Corpus* against the

new law; in the sending of thirty pieces of silver to the commissioner who delivered up Burns; and finally, in the passage and re-affirmation of the Personal Liberty Bill of Massachusetts first, and then of Ohio, by which the two States are placed virtually outside the pale of the Union. Meantime, the escape of slaves to Canada, prodigious before, has been on the increase ever since; and this loss has re-acted on the mind of the South, stimulating the desire for a fresh and more remote territory, where the "peculiar institution" may have another chance.

The last of Mr. Clay's compromises should be stated with some precision, as it is that about which Englishmen are the most anxious,—regarding it as the first stage of the troubles which now threaten the speedy dissolution of the Union in earnest. The causes of trouble were, in fact, all in existence; and the attempt to compromise them simply made them more manifest. There was sufficient evidence by this time that Mr. Clay's method was mere quackery; but in the stress of difficulty, when the South was declining and discontented, in spite of her predominance at Washington, and her aggressions on neighbouring territories, the great Western leader was applied to once more for his nostrum. With all confidence and complacency he set to work to prepare it in January, 1850. These were the terms:—

California was to be admitted into the Union with her anti-slavery constitution; and the slave market in the District of Columbia was to be removed beyond the frontier. The worth of this last so-called concession I have indicated. As to the former, Colonel Frémont (the present candidate for the Presidency) had taken care that California should remain, as far as her laws were concerned, free soil; while there was no interdict upon the residence of slaveholders and their negroes in the new State. This was all on the one side. On the other, there were the following provisions:—Two other candidate States—New Mexico and Utah—were to be admitted without any prohibition of Slavery: the south-western boundary of Texas was to be extended to Rio Grande; and a portion of the debt

of Texas was to be paid on condition of her ceasing to claim a region of New Mexico. The maintenance of Slavery in the District of Columbia was to be guaranteed to the inhabitants as long as they desired to keep it; and the inter-state slave-trade was to be sanctioned till the respective States should themselves forbid it. These last stipulations were made malignant by the addition of a stringent Fugitive Slave Law, which made the citizens of the northern States slave-catchers, and their magistrates kidnappers, in the service of the South. The first Fugitive Slave Law was mischievous enough, from the time when the northern States ceased to hold slaves; but this aggravation of it was sure to be found intolerable. When negroes were universally the working class, living in every house in the country, and transferred whenever convenient, it was natural that an arrangement should be made for their restoration when they ran from one service to another. But the case was altered when all the citizens north of a certain line abjured Slavery, and rendered it illegal. From that time, run-away negroes escaped, not from one service to another, but from slavery to freedom. Mr. Clay himself had said long before that "no *gentleman* would deliver up a slave seeking his freedom." Yet, under this Compromise, a system of law and office was devised which subjected every citizen to penalties who failed to deliver up a fugitive slave. The special judges appointed for the hearing of the cases on the arrest of negroes, were to be paid a large fee if they sent back the negro to the South, and a small fee if they decreed him a freeman. There were other provisions which no upright and humane citizen has found himself able to obey. It was in the apprehension of this, while aware that the South would not be satisfied with less, that Mr. Clay clubbed together provisions which seemed to have nothing to do with each other, and which procured for the whole measure the nickname of the Omnibus Bill. The violence with which the measure was argued is probably remembered by everybody; and especially that Mr. Foote, a senator from Mississippi, presented a pistol at the aged Colonel Benton, of Missouri, a slaveholder, but an unwilling convert by

this time to free-soil doctrine. The course and conclusion of the debate were further rendered memorable by the extinction of some eminent political reputations. Mr. Webster had long been distrusted and despised by the best men of his own and other States; but he was still the pride of Massachusetts, and regarded as an eminent statesman by the Union generally. He now committed political suicide by supporting Clay's last Compromise. A great public meeting in Faneuil Hall, Boston, was held, on the ground that the citizens of all parties "had read with surprise, alarm, and deep regret, Mr. Webster's late speech on the subject of Slavery." Mr. Webster avoided meeting his constituents by taking office, and resigning his seat in the Senate; but he never held up his head again. When he permitted himself to be nominated for President, two years later, his last remaining hope was, that he had gained the favour of the South by his sacrifice of the rights and dignities of the North; and when the paucity of votes for him in the Convention showed that all was lost, he sank at once, and died broken-hearted, in October, 1852. Mr. Clay had preceded him, dying in June of the same year, and having failed also in the aims of his life—disappointed of the Presidentship, seeing his compromises unavailing, obscure and incompetent men raised over his head by the very spirit of compromise which he had fostered, and his country left exposed to all the old perils—perils aggravated by delay, and the long chafing of passions and sectional strifes. The third great leader, Mr. Calhoun, had died during the first discussion of Mr. Clay's new Compromise. Mr. Calhoun had never compromised. He was the champion (and a very sanguine one) of Slavery; yet he, with his dying breath, declared himself broken-hearted at the prospects of his State and of the whole South. Slavery was doomed, he said; and nothing but ruin, he was unhappily persuaded, could follow on the extinction of the "peculiar institution."

The Omnibus Bill did not pass when first proposed. It was thrown out by a great effort; but each of its provisions was afterwards carried by hook or by crook. For a year or two, the conflicts of the new law and the "higher law" of repub-

lican principle became more fierce, close, and portentous. More slaves ran away, and fewer citizens were willing to deliver them up. The Southern claimants became exasperated, and they employed agents (or men claimed to be their agents) who kidnapped any negroes who came conveniently to hand. The South complained of being pillaged of their human property; and the North of being coerced to Southern interests. Clear-sighted men in all countries had said from the beginning that the Fugitive Slave Law would not work. The South was exasperated because it did not; and the North was resolved that it should not. Every public man who advocated it sank under the rising tide of popular indignation, and reappeared no more.

The same was the case after the passage of the Nebraska Bill—the last great outrage. The three leaders above mentioned were all dead before 1853, when the Nebraska Bill passed. Mr. Everett had never been relied on for strength of principle, nor for any degree of political courage. When the time of crisis came—the vote on the Nebraska Bill—he absented himself. His retirement was a natural consequence of the disgust of his constituents; and his political life was closed. While these well-known men were dropping out of sight, Mr. Sumner, and a very few companions of the Free-soil Party were making an unavailing stand against the encroachments of the slave power in Congress. At the beginning of his second session in the Senate, Mr. Sumner and two comrades were excluded from all congressional committees, on the assigned ground that they were “outside of any healthy organization in the country.” When the Kansas and Nebraska measures came on, their influence was found to be increased rather than diminished by this proscription by the slave power.

While the Fugitive Slave Law was working ill for the South, the other portions of the last Clay Compromise were more satisfactory in their operation. New Mexico and Utah were officered with Southern men in the interests of the slave power; and some slaves had been successfully carried into California. There was even a hope that California might be

divided, and the southern half made into a slave State. Yet the South regarded with apprehension the stretch of north-western territory which was protected from Slavery by the Missouri Compromise. Immigrants from Europe were traversing the Northern States by tens of thousands; and free labour was likely to flourish, and form States, and send new senators to Congress. The South, therefore, formed the audacious project of repealing the Missouri Compromise, of breaking down the barrier which the whole nation was sworn to maintain, to save the whole expanse of north-western territory from being inundated by Slavery.

When the Nebraska Bill was introduced for this concealed purpose, it appeared harmless enough. The proposal was, to establish a territorial government in Nebraska—the region which extends west and north-west of Missouri. Nothing was said about Slavery; and everybody but those in the plot supposed that there was no question of Slavery, as the entire region lay beyond the line appointed under the Missouri Compromise. By a sudden device the Bill was delayed on the last day of the session; and by the beginning of the next, the slave power had its policy ready. Mr. Douglass, a fitting tool for such instigators as are believed to have employed him, pleaded that New Mexico and Utah had been allowed to please themselves about admitting or rejecting Slavery; and that all other new States—and Kansas and Nebraska first—should have the same liberty of choice. To effect this, he moved that the Compromise of 1850 should be regarded as final and conclusive, and that the Missouri Compromise should be repealed. It was in January, 1854, that Mr. Douglass brought forward his proposal. It will be best to cite the words of both enactments, though that of 1820 has been already quoted. The Missouri Compromise provided thus:—

“And be it further enacted, that in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36 deg. 30 min. north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this Act, Slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the

punishment of crime whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, *shall be, and hereby is, prohibited for ever.*"

Mr. Douglass's amendment was this, (in the Bill for the territorial organization of Nebraska) :—

"And when admitted *as a State or States*, the said Territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union, *with or without Slavery, as their Constitutions may prescribe at the time of their admission.*"

The reader will at once observe that provision is here made for a plurality of States, in case of the admission of Slavery being carried; and he will foresee that, if the Bill was carried, there must be a race run for the settlement of the Territory, to decide whether it should be pro-slavery or anti-slavery, when the time came for its admission into the Union. It was even so. As soon as the measure was (by highly disgraceful means) rendered secure, the territory was divided, and we began to hear of Kansas: and what the struggle for possession has been, the existing plight of Kansas makes manifest to all eyes. The South believed that, by Senator Douglass's audacity, their party in the Senate would be reinforced by four votes which the Missouri Compromise had prospectively assigned to the free states; and great was their triumph. But they had now touched the summit of their power, and decline seems to be in store for them. The choice appears to be simply between their submission to have Slavery made sectional and Liberty national, and—the dissolution of the Union. Already the prominent men on that occasion are disgraced. Their constituents have rejected them; and Mr. Everett is only the first of a long line of public men whom the infamous Nebraska Bill has driven into retirement. It has closed the career of President Pierce; and there is hope that the ravage which it has wrought may prove an opening to a just, faithful, and constitutional policy. The precise date of this iniquitous Bill ought to be recorded. It was passed at 5 a.m. of the fourth of March, 1854, by a vote in the Senate of twenty-three to fourteen. One fact which casts a curious light on the affair is that, of the majority of twenty-three, fourteen votes were

given by senators from the free States, while two of the minority were given by senators from slave States—(Texas and Tennessee). Six from the free States, and three from the slave States absented themselves,—Mr. Everett being one of the six.

All was not lost; though this throwing open of the wide, free North-west to slave institutions, and the political thralldom which always accompanies them, was enough to make the stoutest heart “despair of the Republic.” All was not lost while the land lay open for settlement. There must now be a race for possession, between the slaveholders of the South and the labourers (supported by the capitalists) of the North.

The northern youth, always ready for “fresh fields and pastures new,” were not slow to people Kansas. Fertile lands, well drained by parallel rivers, cutting ravines in the rich soil, were to be found over a large proportion of the territory. On the great rivers, there were facilities for an almost boundless trade; while the game and fish of the remoter districts were tempting to the hunter and sportsman. Some recent allegations of Southern newspapers have brought out the fact that the free State settlers of Kansas were, as far as the new England immigrants were concerned, of the true old sort,—hardy, laborious, temperate, earnest,—as anxious to carry their bibles with them as their brides. A great number more appear to be European immigrants, especially Germans.

The enterprise of settling Kansas took form, as other enterprises do, in the United States. An Emigrant Aid Association was formed, partly, it seems, for the purpose of securing free-labour institutions in Kansas by facilitating and regulating the settlement of the land; partly for the purpose of shifting European immigration from the east, where it was not wanted, to the west, where it is; and partly, of course, to make money. A very large hotel was erected at the town of Lawrence in Kansas for the reception of the new comers, and proper arrangements were made for their distribution and settlement on the land. Thus was it managed by the free

States. Every body meantime was wondering how the slave States could at all compete with the North. The whole number of slaveholders was, at the time of the last census, under 350,000, of the 27,000,000 of inhabitants of the United States: and the removal to Kansas of any considerable number of planters, with their slaves, would be ruinous to the States they left. So thought the world in general,—the world in general being scarcely aware of the existence of that wretched and degraded race,—the “mean-whites” of the slave States, and scarcely anybody being fully aware of the numbers included under that local term.

Wherever Slavery exists, labour becomes, of course, a badge of degradation. In America, no class,—not even the slaves, are so utterly degraded as the whites who, in slave States, have no property, and must live by work or theft. The planters are always trying to get rid of them, as dangerous and vexatious neighbours; and these poor wretches—the descendants, for the most part, of the proud colonists of two centuries ago,—are reduced to sell their last foot of land, and be driven forth to live where they can. They are receivers of stolen goods from plantations, and traffickers in bad whiskey, doing no honest work that they can avoid, and being employed by nobody who can get work done by any other hands. Few of them can read; most of them drink; and the missionaries report of them as savage to an unparalleled degree,—many having never heard of God or of Jesus Christ. Of this class are the “Sand-hillers” the “Clay-eaters,” and other fearful abnormal classes of residents in the slave States. Strangers hear, in visits to plantations, of these “mean-whites” as the supreme nuisance of the South, but are led to suppose that they are a mere handful of people, able to do a good deal of mischief by tampering with and corrupting the slaves. The last census, however, reveals the tremendous fact that these “mean-whites” are seven-tenths of the whole white population of the slave States. Members of Congress never allude to these people; and in all notices of Southern affairs, the population is assumed to consist of planters and their slaves.

Everything is done in the name of the slaveholders, as if the other seven-tenths of the white population did not exist. These are the immigrants whom the slave-power is sending into Kansas. These are, with a very few exceptions, the only possible settlers from the South, where the slaveholders are few, and, if they desire to move, would go Southwards. They have raised bodies of "mean-whites," clothed and armed them, and sent them to Kansas to uphold slave institutions. But these people are not to be depended on for upholding Slavery, after they have once witnessed the privileges of free labour. In the free States on the Ohio, they have occasionally exhibited a curious spectacle of conversion. In Kansas, they appear to be, thus far, a mere banditti. Of one company from Alabama, of which great boast was made, many deserted on the way, others absconded with the cash-box, and the rest are ravaging Kansas as marauders,—burning farmsteads, stealing horses, clothes, and money, and compelling the women to fly to the thickets, or across the frontier.

Of course, if left to themselves, the rival settlers would decide their own case; the sober and industrious and well-organized free labourers would presently obtain the ascendancy, and determine that Kansas should be free soil, as it would have been under the Missouri Compromise. But the intervention which has postponed, if not ruined, this prospect—the intervention of the Border Ruffians from Missouri,—is sufficiently well known to the reader. To baffle the free-settlers, who had made their arrangements and elected their officers in an orderly and constitutional way, in pursuance of leave from Federal Government, an armed banditti from Missouri crossed the frontier, voted without any qualification of residence, and finally undermined the house where the votes were taken, seized the ballot-boxes, put the free settlers to flight, removed the Governor, and set up another, and murdered several citizens. The President upheld these intruders in the first instance, sanctioned their appointment, sent United States' troops, arms, and ammunition to their support, and obstructed to the utmost of his power the appointment of

a Congressional Committee of Inquiry. The Commission deputed by Congress has sat, has transmitted a Report, by smuggling devices, to Washington, and escaped without loss of life; and the publication of their Report has just disclosed the horrors they witnessed in Kansas. Lawrence, the capital, is burnt, and almost every village and farmstead is sacked and destroyed. The free-state settlers have sent their wives and children over the frontier, and retired to the south-western portion of the territory, hoping to subsist on wild game and fish till reinforced from the free States. They are hemmed in by the Border Ruffians and Southern whites in hope of starving them into surrender; and forces are posted on the river and along the frontier to disarm all comers, and seize ammunition and supplies of every kind. Large bodies of free State settlers are marching down through Iowa, Wisconsin and Indiana; the Northern States are sending men, money, and supplies; and, in fact, the civil war has begun, which it was the object of so many Compromises to evade. It has begun, too, on the soil of Kansas, which the great Missouri Compromise was broken to deprive of its guaranteed freedom.

The first question—I might say, the inexhaustible wonder—caused by this state of affairs is, why the free States have permitted all this ravage? With the numbers, the industry, the wealth in their own hands, why have they allowed the slave-power to override all other interests, and determine the entire policy of the United States for so long a course of years? One cannot read a Southern newspaper without meeting with peevish complaints that the Northern States engross all the commerce, the manufactures, the wealth, the science, arts, and improvements, which benefit society, leaving the South poor and half-peopled, the estates mortgaged, the harbours empty, the roads and bridges decayed, and the rising generation without prospect, unless by seeking their fortunes in a new region. This is all true; and yet this is the section of the Union which has overborne all the rest. It has impressed a retrograde character on the whole policy and

government of the nation ; lowered the *prestige* of its Presidents ; bullied its allies ; made light of international good faith ; warred upon weak neighbours ; created intense sectional hatred at home ; annulled the constitutional rights of the citizens ; broken the hearts of ambitious statesmen ; and jeopardized free institutions all over the world, as far as corruption, leading to failure, can do so. It has, as we have seen, invented Compromises to evade danger, and broken them when advantage invited. I had rather leave the North to explain why it has permitted all this mischief, and made itself a party to all this disgrace. It is a sad story ; and all I need say of it now is, that Idolatry of the Union is one chief cause of the apparent pusillanimity and complicity in guilt ; and Mammon-worship is another. Dr. Channing explained the case up to his time ; and history will reveal the rest when the issue has become manifest. The Abolitionists—the Old Organization—have been right from first to last, it now appears ;—right in their interpretation of events, in their principles, in their conduct, in their insight and foresight, and now, especially, in their persistent repudiation of political entanglement of every sort. They will save their country (if it is to be saved) by refusing to commit its chief cause to the uncertain issues of political party movement of any kind. They will still keep the citadel of Republican principle while other forces go down into the field of politics to fight for the lesser matter—not whether every man in the Republic shall be free, but whether Slavery shall be national and Freedom sectional, or the reverse.

Taking the lower political view merely—the nearness of the presidential election, and the characters of the two candidates between whom the choice really lies, are of extreme importance. President Pierce is out of the question—a necessary consequence of his having sacrificed all other interests to those of the slave power, while, at the same time, he has alienated the South by incurring the danger of foreign war, of which the South has, very reasonably, an extreme dread. If it were not a great mistake to look to any political choice

for redemption in such a crisis as the present, the probable return of Colonel Frémont as President, and Mr. Dayton as Vice-President, would seem to open a bright prospect. Colonel Frémont would almost seem to have been created for the difficulty. He is a Southern man by birth,—was educated in South Carolina, where, and in Virginia, he passed a youth and early manhood of vigorous study first, and then of humble and heroic labour (as a teacher of mathematics), for the sake of his widowed mother and her children. He is a classical scholar of no ordinary attainments;—his surveying achievements attest his mathematical accomplishments. His virtuous life and refined manners have attached everybody to him wherever he went. Thus he is—what the South professes to make a point of—a gentleman. His professional occupations and his travels and adventures have kept him out of the field of politics and the entanglements of party; while his relations with the Indians, and his connexion with California, have proved his administrative ability to be very great. His wide experience has made him a thorough-going Free-soiler; and to him the Union owes free California, while to him California owes her being free. Like most military officials, he is more pacifically inclined than civilians often are, and than President Pierce has shown himself to be. On this ground also the South may probably incline to him. The North is enthusiastic even beyond its wont in this contest; and grave men declare that since the time of Washington no such demonstration has been witnessed in the Eastern States as the Convention at Philadelphia for the nomination of Frémont and Dayton. The latter candidate is also a well and favourably-known man. He consistently opposed all the retrograde measures of the last two Presidential terms, and sacrificed his political position to his principles, in days when the minority of men like himself was exceedingly small.

Of Mr. Buchanan, the rival of Colonel Frémont, it is only necessary to say what he himself and his supporters say for him. By the *Richmond Enquirer*, of June 20th (a leading newspaper in the South), I see that Mr. Buchanan supported

the restrictions of the post-office, the press, and the right of petition, twenty years ago; and between that time and this, the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, the annexation of Texas, the admission of Arkansas, the encouragement of Slavery in new territories, the extension of the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific, and then the abolition of that Compromise; the Fugitive Slave law, the Nebraska Bill; and, finally, "the Monroe doctrine" of aggression, in order to the absorption of neighbouring States. The Ostend Circular is the die which he cast for his acceptance or rejection as President. By this he will stand or fall. As the South has recently manifested an indisputable disinclination to war, and, in some portions, to the annexation of even Cuba, it may be concluded that the Ostend Circular will not be so serviceable to Mr. Buchanan as he expected. No one who is at all familiar with American politics will venture upon prophecy with regard to the presidential election, or any other future event. All that is certain is, first, the respective programmes (in American language, "platforms") of the Democratic and Republican Parties; and, next, that some new and decisive issue will be found from the present crisis. As for "platforms,"—that of the supporters of Buchanan, the Democratic Convention, shaped by the pressure of the time, is this:—

1st. Congress not to preclude Slavery in candidate territories.

2nd. Kansas to be a slave State.

3rd. War, for acquisition of territory.

That of Frémont's supporters, the Republican Convention, is this:—

1st. Congress to preclude Slavery in candidate territories, as in the first days of the Republic.

2nd. Kansas to be a free State, as resolved by three-fourths of its resident population.

3rd. Peace abroad, in order to development at home.

As for the issue to be looked for from the present crisis, it is not likely to be by compromise of any sort. Not only have

the failures of compromise been too many and too great, but the case has gone too far for any but a radical settlement,—whether it be immediate or of slow operation,—whether by concession on either hand, or by a dissolution of the Union. Further compromise would be but another name for retrogression and ruin ; and every friend of free institutions will, therefore, hope that the time is indeed past for compromise.

I have endeavoured to meet an expressed want by explaining the terms of the great American Controversy, and thus furnishing a key to the existing crisis. For the rest, events are likely henceforth to speak very plainly for themselves.

THE END.

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